

Pre-existing music as authorial signature in the fiction films of Martin Scorsese

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[p.11]

In his review of Martin Scorsese's 2013 film *The Wolf of Wall Street*, Xan Brooks of *The Guardian* argues for the director's latest as 'a stylistic homage, a remastered greatest hits compilation, an amiable bit of self-infringement'.¹ Brooks and other critics note parallels to earlier Scorsese works in terms both of story – main character Jordan Belfort's 'fast ride through a descending spiral of guilt-free hedonism and depravity' recalling Henry Hill's in *Goodfellas* (1990),² for instance – and style, with the visual use of 'slow-motion and freeze-frames'³ and the aural inclusion of a 'Goodfellas-style voice-over'⁴ among the particular devices remarked upon.

¹ Xan Brooks, 'The Wolf of Wall Street – first look review', *The Guardian*, 17 December 2014, <<http://www.theguardian.com/film/2013/dec/17/the-wolf-of-wall-street-first-look-review>> accessed 14 April 2014.

² Ian Christie, 'Birth of a Salesman', *Sight & Sound*, vol. 24, no. 2 (February 2014), 44.

³ Brooks, 'The Wolf of Wall Street'.

⁴ Geoffrey Macnab, 'The Wolf of Wall Street, review: Scorsese's film on rogue trader Jordan Belfort is on the money', *The Independent*, 16 January 2014, <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/reviews/the-wolf-of-wall-street->

Little mention has been made of the film's music in this context, though *Variety*'s Scott Foundas does suggest that having 'a quadruple album's worth of classic rock and blues fill up the soundtrack' contributes to *Wolf* being 'almost self-consciously Scorsesean' in its style.⁵ I would similarly argue that Scorsese's use of music in *Wolf* situates that film as strongly within his *oeuvre* as does any other of its attributes, and in this essay will evidence this through an examination of his uses of music across that *oeuvre* as a whole. However, though the presence of 'classic rock and blues' is a factor in this (as will be noted below), I do not see it as the central one. Rather, it is the presence of *pre-existing* music that is crucial. My primary assertion here is that pre-existing music, and the director's particular manners of employing it, are common and thus defining features of his work, forming a key part of Scorsese's authorial signature, and indeed doing so more strongly for him than for perhaps any other mainstream filmmaker.

Scorsese does have rivals in this regard. Quentin Tarantino and Stanley Kubrick, for instance, are two directors who have been singled out in academic literature to a far greater extent for their uses – like Scorsese – of (mostly) pre-existing music.⁶ [p.13] Scorsese, though, has to date directed more feature-length fiction films than those two filmmakers combined, and where Tarantino's 'sonic

film-review--scorseses-film-about-rogue-trader-jordan-belfort-is-on-the-money-9065519.html> accessed 14 April 2014. The idea of character voice-over narration as a signature Scorsese device is acknowledged by *Wolf*'s screenwriter, Terence Winter: 'I asked Marty's blessing to write it with voiceover, knowing that *Goodfellas* and *Casino* were written the same way, and to a certain extent *Mean Streets* as well. [...] [It] was great that I had license to tell the story in that way.' In David Ehrlich, 'Screenwriter Terence Winter on How *The Wolf of Wall Street* is Scorsese's Next *Goodfellas*', *Film.com*, 19 December 2013, <<http://www.film.com/movies/terence-winter-interview-the-wolf-of-wall-street>> accessed 14 April 2014.

⁵ Scott Foundas, 'Film Review: *The Wolf of Wall Street*', *Variety*, 17 December 2014, <<http://variety.com/2013/film/reviews/film-review-the-wolf-of-wall-street-1200940974/>> accessed 14 April 2014.

⁶ On Tarantino, see particularly Lisa Coulthard, 'The Attractions of Repetition: Tarantino's Sonic Style', in James Wierzbicki (ed.), *Music, Sound and Filmmakers: Sonic Style in Cinema* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 165-174, and Ken Garner, "'Would You Like to Hear Some Music?'" Music in-and-out-of- control in the Films of Quentin Tarantino', in K.J. Donnelly (ed.), *Film Music: Critical Approaches* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), 188-205. On Kubrick, see particularly Christine Lee Gengaro, *Listening to Stanley Kubrick: The Music in His Films* (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2013), and Kate McQuiston, *'We'll Meet Again': Musical Design in the Films of Stanley Kubrick* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

style’ can be viewed by comparison as potentially still in development (his use of original songs in *Django Unchained* [2012] notably being a first), and Kubrick’s as having taken time to develop (his penchant for striking employments of pre-existing music revealing itself initially only in his seventh film, *Dr. Strangelove* [1964], before becoming a true fixture of his work from *2001: A Space Odyssey* [1968] onwards), Scorsese’s has remained remarkably consistent from his early works onwards.

Indeed, where eclecticism is arguably the signature of both other directors even when considering solely their uses of pre-existing music, certain aspects of Scorsese’s consistency mean that other possible ‘musical signatures’ do suggest themselves. Broadly, the use of popular music is one; only a handful of Scorsese’s films feature no popular music whatsoever, while the prominence of *original* popular music in *The Color of Money* (1986) – with such music also featuring less markedly in a few of his other films – further supports a reading based on the genre rather than pre-existence of the music. More particularly, certain popular music styles and artists recur across films. *Wolf*’s prominent use of that ‘classic rock and blues’, for instance, can fairly be judged to place it alongside various predecessors. In terms of blues (and blues-based) music specifically, *Casino* (1995) is the most notable of these: where *Wolf* uses tracks by Elmore James and Howlin’ Wolf in its opening few minutes and expands from there, *Casino* employs songs by, amongst others, B.B. King, Muddy Waters, Eric Clapton, Cream, and the Rolling Stones, all of whom can further be heard in other Scorsese films. The Stones are the most famously recurring artists of all, in fact, for multiple songs of theirs are featured in each of *Mean Streets* (1973), *Goodfellas*, *Casino*, and *The Departed* (2006). ‘Gimme Shelter’ appears in all four, with its use at *The Departed*’s opening in conjunction with character voice-over narration offering a moment of apparent ‘self-infringement’ far more specific than any in *Wolf*.

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It would be simplistic to suggest that eclecticism is not also present in Scorsese’s catalogue, though. There are other kinds of music even in the films mentioned: J.S. Bach’s *St Matthew Passion* and George Delerue’s orchestral ‘Thème de Camille’ (from his score to *Contempt* [*Le Mépris*, dir. Jean-Luc Godard, 1963]) are among the other selections heard prominently in *Casino*, for example, while *Wolf* uses a clip from Henry Purcell’s aria ‘What Power Art Thou’ (from *King Arthur*) at a key

comic moment. And other Scorsese films are *dominated*, either qualitatively or quantitatively, by non-popular music: for one, *Raging Bull* (1980) famously foregrounds the ‘Intermezzo’ from Pietro Mascagni’s *Cavalleria rusticana* (as well as using pieces from two other Mascagni operas), while *Shutter Island* (2010) has been rightly described as ‘a new-music haven’ owing to its use of mostly twentieth- and twenty-first-century art music by composers such as Ingram Marshall, John Adams, and Morton Feldman.⁷

The attribute of pre-existence is a more all-encompassing one, then. True, there are instances of music in the director’s work not defined by pre-existence, as already noted with reference to the original popular music in *The Color of Money*. Composer Howard Shore has even become a regular Scorsese collaborator in recent years, having contributed cues for *Gangs of New York* (2002), *The Aviator* (2004), *The Departed*, and *Hugo* (2011), as well as for *After Hours* (1985), while Elmer Bernstein, after overseeing the music for *Cape Fear* (1991, on which more below), scored *The Age of Innocence* (1993) and *Bringing Out the Dead* (1999) before having his music for *Gangs* rejected. [p.15] However, even those Scorsese films that do not use pre-existing music exclusively nevertheless use it prominently (if to varying quantitative extents), while those few that do not use pre-existing music at all – *Boxcar Bertha* (1972), *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), and *Kundun* (1997) – can be clearly seen as exceptions. *The Wolf of Wall Street*, in effectively featuring *only* pre-existing music (save for a few short cues by Theodore Shapiro, heard as score to mock commercials seen in the film), joins a list that includes *Mean Streets*, *Raging Bull*, *Goodfellas*, and *Casino*. Bernstein’s rejected original score for *Gangs* was replaced with what the composer himself termed ‘a Scorsese score’,⁸ a compilation of mostly pre-existing elements (some newly arranged and performed) in which even Shore’s contributions hail from a previously unheard concert work –

⁷ Mark Swed, ‘Critic’s Notebook: *Shutter Island* as a new-music haven’, *Los Angeles Times*, 24 February 2010, <<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/culturemonster/2010/02/shutter-island-as-a-new-music-paradise.html>> accessed 14 April 2014.

⁸ Roger Friedman, ‘Knowing the Score: The wise man of movie music composition, Elmer Bernstein, celebrates 50 years in Hollywood’, *Elmer Bernstein*, <<http://www.elmerbernstein.com/bio/interviews/redcarpet.html>> accessed 14 April 2014.

‘Brooklyn Heights’ – rather than having been composed specifically for the picture.⁹ Finally, it may be significant that certain instances of the use of original music in Scorsese’s films – that is, certain instances of music that do not reflect and thus forward the authorial signature argued for here – can seemingly be attributed to external pressures. [p.16] The director suggests that the status of *The Color of Money* as ‘a commercial movie’ necessitated the production of ‘a tie-in album’,¹⁰ for instance, while it is tempting to hear the inclusion of U2’s original song ‘The Hands That Built America’ in the end credits of *Gangs of New York* – described by Mervyn Cooke as ‘a good example of the stylistic and emotional lurch that results when a modern pop song suddenly intrudes to play out a drama notable for its lavish attention to period detail’¹¹ – as similarly studio driven, particularly given that film’s well-documented budget and schedule overruns.¹²

Why pre-existing music?

Of course, the decision to use pre-existing music in a film can owe something to commercial considerations. Given the stylistic eclecticism evident in Scorsese’s employments of such music both generally and within individual films, and his selection of often ‘old’ and ‘obscure’ music, though, commerce does not seem to be among his priorities. It is not far fetched to suggest that his uses of music draw audiences to his films: witness *MTV* and *Hollywood Reporter* interviews with *Wolf*’s music supervisor Randall Poster, focusing on the music selected for that film (and providing plugs for its soundtrack album), as proof of the interest that this element of

⁹ See Emanuel Levy, ‘Talking with Howard Shore on Film Music’, *Emanuel Levy: Cinema* 24/7, <<http://emanuellevy.com/interviews/talking-with-howard-shore-on-film-music-5/>> accessed 14 April 2014.

¹⁰ In Ian Christie and David Thompson (eds), *Scorsese on Scorsese*, rev. ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), 110. Michael Henry Wilson points out that the film was the first the director ‘made within the Hollywood machine, working with a big studio and a substantial budget’, part of a strategy of ‘one for them, one for myself’ that allowed him the freedom to continue making ‘personal’ pictures such as *Goodfellas*. Michael Henry Wilson, *Scorsese on Scorsese* (Paris: Cahiers du cinéma Sarl, 2011), 132.

¹¹ Mervyn Cooke, *A History of Film Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 407.

¹² See, for instance, Josh Young, ‘Ready to Rumble’, *Entertainment Weekly*, 17 May 2002, <<http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,238185,00.html>> accessed 14 April 2014.

the director's films can generate in advance of their release.¹³ But there has been no notable attempt to base a film's musical strategy on the work of a well-known composer or performer, for example, and then promote that film on that basis. As Cameron Crowe suggests regarding the use of music by the Rolling Stones in *Mean Streets*, 'we know that was a choice that came from the heart, not from somebody at the last minute saying, "Let's get a Rolling Stones song, Marty"'.¹⁴ [p.17] (On occasion, financial concerns have affected Scorsese's choices in other ways: he notes, for one, that on *Mean Streets*, '[t]here was one Rolling Stones song I couldn't get in – it was just too much money [to license] it'.¹⁵)

Personal musical experience and taste are undoubtedly two factors behind Scorsese's tendency towards pre-existing music, for they underpin many of the particular choices belonging to this category. Cooke identifies in the director's uses of music a characteristic 'realist aesthetic which, even in his first film *Who's That Knocking at My Door?* (1968), aimed to capture the effect of being bombarded by wildly different types of music in a cosmopolitan neighbourhood'.¹⁶ This is the 'crazy' environment in which Scorsese grew up, and that, he states, 'made me think, why don't they do that in films?'.¹⁷ Pre-existing music used in this context can be thought of as *real* music: music recognizable from the cinema audience's own, real world, that is therefore the ideal choice for a filmmaker wishing to construct an accurate and authentic fictional representation of that world, as Scorsese commonly does. In his case, the historical and geographical settings of certain of his films have further allowed him to draw upon the actual music he experienced: *Raging Bull*'s 1940s-50s New York is the time and location of Scorsese's childhood, for example,

¹³ Sophie Schillaci, 'Wolf of Wall Street Music Producer Explains How Kanye West Ended Up In The Trailer', *MTV*, 23 December 2013, <<http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1719523/wolf-of-wall-street-kanye-west-soundtrack.jhtml>> accessed 14 April 2014, and Tim Appelo, 'Scorsese's Music Man on *Wolf of Wall Street* Soundtrack Album: "Marty is Fearless"', *The Hollywood Reporter*, 25 December 2013, <<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/earshot/scorseses-music-man-wolf-wall-667621>> accessed 14 April 2014.

¹⁴ In Jonathan Romney and Adrian Wootton (eds), *Celluloid Jukebox: Popular Music and the Movies Since the 50s* (London: British Film Institute, 1995), 133.

¹⁵ Martin Scorsese and Amy Robinson, 'Commentary by director Martin Scorsese and actress Amy Robinson', *Mean Streets*, dir. Martin Scorsese, 1973 (DVD, 'Special Edition', Universal, 2005). Which Rolling Stones song this was is not stated.

¹⁶ Cooke, *History of Film Music*, 484.

¹⁷ In Christie and Thompson (eds), *Scorsese on Scorsese*, 28.

with the director therefore ‘able to use the songs that I grew up with and draw on my own collections of 78s’.¹⁸ [p.18] And it is not merely the 1970s New York environment of *Mean Streets* that Scorsese acknowledges as autobiographical, but also its actions and characters,¹⁹ the use of ‘music I heard on the streets where I lived’ thus similarly motivated.²⁰

That particular genres and artists heard in films such as *Mean Streets* and *Raging Bull* recur in depicted environments less obviously connected to Scorsese’s own experience highlights the broader influence of the director’s personal tastes on his musical selections. The twenty-first-century Boston of *The Departed*, for instance, is not part of Scorsese’s background, yet the Rolling Stones (and ‘Gimme Shelter’) still feature. His fondness for the blues, meanwhile, can in part explain its presence in *The Wolf of* [late-twentieth-century] *Wall Street* and other films in which it does not obviously reflect the historical or geographical setting.²¹ Both the Stones and the blues are the subjects of Scorsese-fronted documentary projects, indicating their status as passions of his: the former star in the Scorsese-directed concert film *Shine a Light* (2008; ‘Gimme Shelter’ is not performed, somewhat ironically), while the latter inspired the Scorsese-produced television series *The Blues* (2003; Scorsese also directed the first episode, ‘Feel Like Going Home’).

[p.19]

Scorsese is clearly a director concerned with and fascinated by music, then. And in his fiction films, the use of pre-existing music allows him to connect those films more closely to his own personality and outlook than would be possible through using original music composed by another individual or individuals. On a practical level, too, such music – and now whether it represents his own tastes or not – offers Scorsese, as a non-musician filmmaker, a potential level of certainty and control over

¹⁸ In *ibid.*, 83.

¹⁹ ‘*Mean Streets* was an attempt to put myself and my old friends on the screen, to show how we lived, what life was like in Little Italy.’ In *ibid.*, 48.

²⁰ In Mary Pat Kelly, *Martin Scorsese: A Journey* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1992), 97.

²¹ *Wolf*’s executive music producer, Robbie Robertson, asserts that ‘[n]obody but Marty and me would have chosen [Howlin’ Wolf’s] “Smokestack Lightning” for a movie that takes place in the ’80s and ’90s because it’s got nothing to do with anything except raw amazement’. In Hugh Hart, ‘How Robbie Robertson Put the Blues Howl in *The Wolf of Wall Street* Soundtrack’, *Co.Create*, 6 January 2014, <<http://www.fastcocreate.com/3024219/how-robbie-robertson-put-the-blues-howl-in-wolf-of-wall-street-soundtrack>> accessed 14 March 2014.

his soundtracks that could not be attained when commissioning original music. In importing pre-existing music there is theoretically no need for the creative involvement of anyone other than the director himself, at least when pre-existing recordings are used. This ability to act as *auteur* might be one factor behind Scorsese's uses of such music, particularly given the undoubted centrality of music to his cinematic visions, a status evidenced by statements such as his that, '[w]hen working on a script or being involved with a project, the first thing that comes to mind is the music for the piece.'²²

The contributions of his numerous collaborators in this regard should not be ignored, however. Most obviously, for *Cape Fear*, the manner in which pre-existing music is incorporated signals the hand of a composer, in this case Bernstein. True, it was Scorsese's idea to reuse Bernard Herrmann's score from the original *Cape Fear* (dir. J. Lee Thompson, 1962; Scorsese's film is a remake), and the director apparently 'already had specific ideas about where he wanted to use [Herrmann's] music' before Bernstein became involved with the project, according to Bernstein himself.²³ [p.20] What these ideas were, and whether they were enacted, is unclear, though, and in any case the extent to which Herrmann's music is adapted for the later film – it is not only rerecorded, but in fact *recomposed* in various ways – suggests that the end product owes at least as much to composer as to director.²⁴

Even when importing existing recordings into his films – a far more common manner of using pre-existing music in Scorsese's work – there are individuals besides the director whose contributions to the creative process also need to be taken into account. One of a number of regular collaborators is *Wolf's* executive music producer Robbie Robertson, a friend of Scorsese's who has worked on several of his films following the director's making *The Last Waltz* (1978), the concert film documenting the final performance of Robertson's group The Band. As music consultant on *Casino*, Robertson is credited by Scorsese with suggesting the use of the 'Thème de

²² In *Martin Scorsese: l'émotion par la musique*, dir. Clara Kuperberg and Robert Kuperberg, 2005 (TV).

²³ In *The Making of Cape Fear [1991]*, dir. Laurent Bouzereau, 2001 (DVD, Universal Studios, 2003).

²⁴ Bernstein also suggested the incorporation of music from Herrmann's rejected score for *Torn Curtain* (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1966), which forms a prominent part of the new score. See *ibid.* On the two *Cape Fear* scores, see Jonathan Godsall, 'Cape Fear: Remaking a Film Score', *The Soundtrack*, vol. 4, no. 2 (October 2011), 117-135.

Camille', a key cue in that film,²⁵ while Scorsese also attributes the entire concept of using contemporary art music in *Shutter Island* to his friend, there acting as music supervisor.²⁶ In regard to the actual implementation of the chosen pieces, editor Thelma Schoonmaker is another longstanding partner whose creative input has no doubt helped to shape many of the striking uses of music in Scorsese's films. Yet her statement that Scorsese is 'involved in *every* decision' in the editing room should be borne in mind, and there is little doubting its applicability beyond that particular post-production context.²⁷ [p.21] As will be evidenced below, even the 'Thème de Camille' in *Casino*, and the various pre-existing selections heard in *Shutter Island*, betray Scorsese's signature style in terms of how they are employed. Major film production is a complex process necessitating multiple handlers, whose contributions Scorsese readily acknowledges, and it is important to note that no collaborator has worked with Scorsese on all of his films; his has undoubtedly been the vision to which any 'team' has worked. Claudia Gorbman is thus justified in naming Scorsese as a '*mélomane*', a term she coins to describe directors who 'treat music not as something to farm out to the composer or even to the music supervisor, but rather as a key thematic element and a marker of authorial style'.²⁸

Manners of employment

In considering the signature manners in which Scorsese tends to employ pre-existing music, we can first look to the roles such music plays in the overall musical strategies of his films. Note, for one, how the common recurrence of artists and genres within a

²⁵ In 'Casino: After the Filming', *Casino*, dir. Martin Scorsese, 1995 (DVD, Universal, 2005).

²⁶ In 'Shutter Island – Martin Scorsese interview', *Indie London*, <<http://www.indielondon.co.uk/Film-Review/shutter-island-martin-scorsese-interview>> accessed 14 April 2014.

²⁷ Quoted in Kelly, *Martin Scorsese*, 51. Emphasis original.

²⁸ Claudia Gorbman, 'Auteur Music', in Daniel Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer, and Richard Leppert (eds), *Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema* (London: University of California Press, 2007), 149. On the word itself, Gorbman notes that '[m]élomane is the French term for "music lover" or "music-loving". Containing the Greek roots for music (*melo*) and passion or madness (*mania*), it implies a more excessive, even irrational love for music than its English equivalent. I use this French term to make reference and pay homage to English-language film critics' adoption of the French word *auteur* in the early 1960s: its very lack (or rather multiplicity) of definitions fostered fruitfully contentious debate over who was an *auteur* and why.' (161 n2, emphases original.)

single film, examples of which were noted above, can serve a cohering function. [p.22] The notion of ‘musical concepts’ espoused by Fred Karlin and Rayburn Wright (who argue that such concepts can give a music track ‘a unified approach that helps maintain the film’s dramatic integrity’²⁹) is echoed in a comment such as Scorsese’s that ‘[i]n *Goodfellas* the sound is more Phil Spector, while in [*Casino*] it’s more the Stones’.³⁰ More particularly, pre-existing music is often used thematically in Scorsese’s films. In *Shutter Island*, the repeated tones of the Passacaglia from Krzysztof Penderecki’s Symphony No. 3 recur on several occasions, as do the timpani minor thirds from the second part of Morton Feldman’s *Rothko Chapel*. In *The King of Comedy* (1982), short portions of Ray Charles’s ‘Sweet Sixteen Bars’ are consistently used at major spatial and temporal discontinuities (and also mesh stylistically with the song used in the opening credits: Charles’s version of ‘Come Rain or Come Shine’). And in *Casino*, the ‘Thème de Camille’ accompanies four scenes depicting disintegrating partnerships (the marriage of Sam and Ginger, and the working alliance of Sam and Nicky), further recurring as the first music heard over the end credits to forward the notion that these disintegrations are a central strand of *Casino*’s story. There are many other examples of Scorsese using pre-existing music to perform such global functions.

These functions are not emphasized at the expense of local ones, though. Consider, for instance, how the ‘Thème de Camille’ is, firstly, musically appropriate for scenes of failing ‘marriages’: it is orchestrated predominantly for strings, and has a slow-moving, lyrical melody, with basic but lush harmonies sketched out by an arpeggiated counterline, and so is in many ways paradigmatic of the kind of cue one might find in a romantic melodrama. On its first hearing, it is also layered with a portion of Ginger Baker’s drum solo from the Cream track ‘Toad’ (which is itself also heard elsewhere in the film), its plaintive effect thus combining with one of far greater movement and pace to drive the scene forward. [p.23] And there is an extra-musical meaningfulness to the uses of ‘Camille’ in *Casino* that can be recognized, too, owing to the music’s invocation of *Contempt*, its original context, in which its many

²⁹ Fred Karlin and Rayburn Wright, *On the Track: A Guide to Contemporary Film Scoring*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004), 63.

³⁰ In Christie and Thompson (eds), *Scorsese on Scorsese*, 207.

statements all occur in scenes depicting the changing state of the marriage of characters Paul and Camille.³¹

The successful combination of such individual concerns – by which pre-existing tracks function on multiple levels and in multiple ways – is characteristic of Scorsese. To take another specific example from *Casino*, consider the use of the Jeff Beck Group's 'I Ain't Superstitious'. First, this fits stylistically into the overall blues and blues-based 'sound' of the film. More specifically, the song, heard non-diegetically across three minutes of the film, provides a constant accompaniment to a complex visual montage showing casino boss Sam's suspicion and apprehension of a pair of patrons cheating at the blackjack tables, offering continuity that the quick-cutting images (with associated diegetic sound) and fragmentary voice-over narration lack. Furthermore, it gradually thickens in texture as the casino staff close in, climaxing and returning to relative sparsity at the precise moment one of the individuals is shocked by a cattle prod. And then there are the lyrics: 'I got a feeling about the future, and it ain't too good' is clearly heard as Sam begins to investigate his suspicions, while the titular 'Ain't superstitious' is similarly audible as we are shown the electronic signalling device the pair are using to beat the dealer at one table, removing any need for superstition. [p.24] While starting midway through its course and finishing shortly before its actual end, the song is otherwise not edited in its appearance in *Casino*. The non-musical elements of this sequence were clearly constructed to some extent around the music, compensating for the relative inflexibility of the existing recording used, and indicating the privileged position that music often occupies in Scorsese's working process.

As Beck's cover of 'I Ain't Superstitious' is from 1968, it also fulfils the criterion of being historically appropriate for the mid-1970s setting of the *Casino* sequence in which it is heard. The idea of using period music is another concept that

³¹ Though I have been unable able to find any published account in which Scorsese mentions the thematic parallels between his and Godard's films as motivating the use of Delerue's music, it seems unlikely that he would not have been at least aware of them given his undoubted status as cinephile, and avowed appreciation for *Contempt* specifically: Philip Lopate notes that Scorsese co-sponsored the 1997 re-release of the film, and quotes him as calling it 'brilliant, romantic and genuinely tragic' and 'one of the greatest films ever made about the actual process of filmmaking'. Philip Lopate, 'Contempt: The Story of a Marriage', *The Criterion Collection*, <<http://www.criterion.com/current/posts/240-contempt-the-story-of-a-marriage>> accessed 14 April 2014.

guided the director's choices of music for this film and others: regarding *Goodfellas*, for instance, he points out that, '[i]f a scene took place in 1973, I could use any music that was current or older';³² on *Casino*, '[w]e also tried to keep the music in period, as in *Goodfellas*.'³³ The qualification of 'current or older' is important: recalling his own experiences again, Scorsese notes that 'a lot of places had juke boxes which were still carrying Benny Goodman and old Italian stuff when the Beatles came in',³⁴ and incorporates this effect (and the idea that his characters' musical tastes might not correspond to the popular music of their day) into his films. As Allison Anders puts it, speaking of the influence Scorsese and also Wim Wenders had on her work as a director, '[b]efore them, when you heard a song from the past it was only to be a part of the period to signify the period. Whereas *they* said, "I'm in 1977 and I love the Ronettes"''.³⁵

'I Ain't Superstitious' is, like most of the music in *Casino*, used non-diegetically in the sense that it is not implied to emanate from a source in the particular environment depicted on screen. [p.25] But that this and other similarly non-diegetic tracks in *Casino* and other Scorsese films are still period appropriate, and stylistically related to music that appears diegetically (a factor that, in *Casino*, might situate the more distinct 'Thème de Camille', for one, outside of this category, despite its similarly appropriate 1963 origins), suggests that they were nonetheless intended by the director to belong to – that is, to contribute to the construction of – their respective films' diegeses.³⁶ Some such music even seems to represent very specifically the subjective musical outlooks of particular characters: in *The King of Comedy*, for instance, the apparent non-diegetic status of Ray Charles's 'Come Rain or Come Shine' and 'Sweet Sixteen Bars' is called into question when considering that a photo of Charles appearing on the television show of fictional host Jerry

³² In Christie and Thompson (eds), *Scorsese on Scorsese*, 161. He further notes that 'I wanted to use one Rolling Stones song at the end – "She Was Hot" – for that last day in 1979, but it came out a year later, so I had to use something else'.

³³ In *ibid.*, 207.

³⁴ In *ibid.*, 160-161.

³⁵ In Romney and Wootton (eds), *Celluloid Jukebox*, 124. Emphasis original.

³⁶ 'Off-scene diegetic' might be a useful descriptor for such examples, reflecting how a piece of music can seem to belong to the diegesis even if it does not belong to the specific scene at hand (much as it can still be fully diegetic even if off-screen). On this idea, see Jonathan Godsall, 'Pre-existing music in fiction sound film' (PhD diss., University of Bristol, 2013), 79-86, or Guido Heldt, *Music and Levels of Narration in Film* (Bristol: Intellect, 2013), 70-71.

Langford is seen and discussed by one of the main characters, and that another sings 'Come Rain or Come Shine' to Langford while holding him hostage late on in the film.

This blurring of the diegetic/non-diegetic boundary is part of a move away from the truly veristic towards a stylized realism in Scorsese's films. In a case such as that of 'I Ain't Superstitious', this move is furthered by the more particular ways in which the song 'scores' the action, but such correspondence of music and action can even be observed in strictly diegetic uses of music in the director's films. Excepting its Mascagni, *Raging Bull* is arguably the paragon in regard to its realist, cacophonic deployment of a huge variety of period-appropriate musical selections, almost all of which can be straightforwardly understood as diegetic. But then there are moments such as when main character Jake, in his new nightclub, has two clearly underage girls kiss him in order to 'prove' that they are of legal age to be served alcohol. [p.26] As he does so, Louis Prima and his band, via the latter part of the recorded medley 'Just a Gigolo/I Ain't Got Nobody' (from 1956, and here used in a scene set in that year), can be clearly heard shouting the words 'nobody' and 'no-one' as if taunting Jake for his declining fortunes in both work and love, as champion boxer reduced to corrupt nightclub owner (he is a nobody) with a soon-to-be-failed marriage (he ain't got nobody, so to speak). Though the music is ostensibly diegetic in the room, and the matching of lyrics and action thus ostensibly a matter of happenstance, in a Scorsese film such a moment cannot be perceived as mere coincidence: the hand of the author can be readily felt here as it can in more obviously stylized moments.

Conclusion

To be clear, it is not merely an implied author whose influence can be felt in a case like that of 'Just a Gigolo/I Ain't Got Nobody' in *Raging Bull*, but a real, historical one: Scorsese himself. For here is a use of pre-existing music, and moreover a use of such music demonstrating an attention to detail and layering of the music's roles that is precisely the characteristic manner of employment recognizable from other entries in the director's body of work, and that he acknowledges when discussing that work

(as with regard to *Raging Bull*: '[i]n the mix, I could also slip lyrics that I liked in between dialogue'³⁷). So consistent is such authorial activity – and it should be stressed that the specific examples discussed in the section above are not exceptional, in relation to either the individual films from which they come or Scorsese's *oeuvre* as a whole – that it demands to be ascribed to a tangible rather than theoretical entity. That the choice of music used often seems to be connected to Scorsese's personal experience and taste only strengthens this demand further. [p.27] Scorsese is not an author of this music, but in his manner of creating *with* it effectively appropriates it to represent himself. Now nearly five decades on from *Who's That Knocking at My Door*, his use of pre-existing music is as established a stylistic trademark as any in his vocabulary.

³⁷ In Christie and Thompson (eds.), *Scorsese on Scorsese*, 83.